

## IS IT WRONG TO WANT FOLLOWERS?

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Judgmental Christians Who Condemn Others, It Depends On Your Personal Motives, Is It To Feed Your Pride?, Likes Comments New Followers New Friends And Shares Are Indicators Of How Effective Our Ministry Is, Jesus' Concern For Fruitfulness, Gauge Fruitfulness By Your Statistics, Change Your Approach Or Method If Necessary, It's All About Jesus, Follow Jesus And Be A Fisher Of Men, Apostle Paul Desired Followers And Viewed Them As His Spiritual Children, The Responsibility Of Nurturing And Instructing Your Followers, Nature Of The First Century Church, Spiritual Babes Require Elders And Teachers, Social Network Novices Pretending To Be Experienced Teachers, Doctrines Of Devils, Damnable Heresies, Biblical Foundation For Teaching Ministry, How Can They Teach Without Followers?, Check Your Motives, Don't Become Lifted Up In Pride, Glory In The Lord Only, Remain Humble, My Personal Motivation And The Purpose Of Bill's Bible Basics, Conclusion, Suggested Reading

Occasionally, I will come across certain Christians on the social networks who are rather quick to judge and condemn their brethren, because those brethren desire more likes, comments, post shares, new followers and new friends. The usual response from such judgmental people is to comment with something such as "Oh no! We shouldn't desire or seek likes, comments, post shares, new followers or new friends! That is just your pride and your ego! You are not being very humble! You just want people to put their eyes on you and not on the Lord! That is just man worship! It is so wrong to desire that!" Have you ever come across anyone like that?

Well, my dear friends, I'm sorry, but I beg to differ. You need to understand that there is a balance to be found here which in your haste, some of you may possibly be missing. Allow me to explain what I mean. If wanting, seeking out or hoping for likes, comments, post shares, new followers and new friends is solely for the purpose of inflating one's own ego so that one can boast about how great they are; or if a certain person does it just so that they can impress their

friends with how large of a friends list they have; then I wholeheartedly agree that this is a very wrong motivation indeed. No doubt about it. This is both self-glorification and shameful, and should be avoided.

However, at the same time, considering how much time, energy and money some of us invest into our particular ministries, receiving likes, comments, new followers and new friends, and having others share our posts can serve as good indicators to help us to gauge exactly how effective our ministry actually is to a certain degree. In other words, such statistics are like a thermometer. These various parameters can help us to determine and identify if we are doing something wrong, or if perhaps there is a better way of doing it. Maybe changing our approach or method will help us to bring more fruit into God's Kingdom.

In studying the Scriptures, we discover that the Lord was obviously very concerned about this issue. Just look at how much Jesus spoke about fruitfulness in the Gospels, as well as about what would happen to those lazy people who were not bearing fruit for God's Kingdom. In fact, in the Parable of the Sower, the Lord even touches on the different levels of fruitfulness by mentioning "some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty". Consider the following group of verses:

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold . . . But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Matthew 13:8, 23, KJV

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Matthew 13:31-32, KJV

"And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

Mark 4:20, KJV

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Luke 8:15, KJV

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Luke 13:6-9, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

John 12:24, KJV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned . . . Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:1-6, 16, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also

shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Psalms 1:3, KJV

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Proverbs 11:30, KJV

So to reiterate, by examining our statistics and the level of our online friends' participation in our ministry, we can gauge exactly how fruitful our ministry is really being. If it is not showing a lot of fruit in the way of new friends and followers, likes, comments and post shares, then perhaps it is time to change something and try something different.

Perhaps some of my readers may recall the Parable Jesus told regarding a certain man who had a vineyard. One particular fig tree had not born fruit after three years, so he wanted to immediately cut it down. However, as Jesus explains in the story, one of his workers said "Let me dig about it and fertilize it. Then, if it doesn't begin bearing fruit after that, then you can cut it down." Following is the complete Parable for your consideration:

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Luke 13:6-9, KJV

So just as that wise worker was able to convince the owner of the vineyard to change his approach, in a very similar fashion, by looking at our statistics -- likes, comments, followers, friends and post shares -- we can also determine if perhaps we are doing something wrong, and thus need to change our approach or method in some way. Maybe we need to change what kind of content we post, for example, or perhaps the specific hours in which we post to our page.

Now, of course, it is obviously understood that everything we do as online Christian evangelists and ambassadors of Christ is supposed to be about Jesus, and hopefully leading people to Jesus and to the truth of God's Word. That is a

given. After all, as Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Matthew 4:19, KJV

So clearly then, not only are we supposed to follow Jesus, but we are to strive to inspire others to follow Him as well. That is why the Lord continues by saying ". . . and I will make you fishers of men." So it is equally clear that not only are we supposed to be followers of Christ, but we are also supposed to bring new followers into God's Kingdom. But guess what? There is more to this issue. You see, the Apostle Paul also wrote as follows:

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

1 Corinthians 4:15-16, KJV

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:1, KJV

Thus we see that the Apostle Paul very obviously desired followers, and he was not shy about saying so. In fact, Paul viewed these new converts and followers as his own spiritual children, because he had personally begotten them through preaching the Gospel to them. They were his spiritual fruit. Thus, as a result, Paul felt a personal responsibility for feeding, nurturing and instructing them in their knowledge of the Lord.

Now let me ask you a simple question. Isn't that precisely what a church is according to the pattern which is found in the New Testament? A First Century Church was basically a group of people who coalesced around a certain teacher of God's Word, who then instructed them in the ways of the Lord. Those people were basically his followers, and he was their spiritual elder, correct? As I explain in the article entitled "Where Are the First Century Churches", they quite often met in the privacy of people's homes. There were no church buildings back then. That would not happen until a few centuries later.

The simple truth of the matter is that when people are still young in the faith, they require elders and teachers to help

establish them in the faith. Such young converts don't often possess a very strong foundation in God's Word yet, and they certainly do not possess very much Spiritual Discernment. Thus, they need someone to lead them along, and to instruct them, until they do become strong, mature, fruit-bearing Christians themselves.

If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the state of the social networks today. As I explain in articles such as "Facebook False Prophets and Misguided Teachers", and in "Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures", they are quite full of people who are novices in God's Word, and yet who foolishly project themselves as being experienced teachers of the Holy Scriptures. They teach all kinds of strange and quite unscriptural doctrines which do NOT conform to God's Word. Sadly, this is nothing new. This nonsense has in fact been occurring since the First Century, and the Apostles had to deal with it as well, as is evident by the following sample group of verses:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

1 Timothy 4:1-2, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

1 Timothy 1:6-7, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to

themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Hebrews 5:11-14, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1, KJV

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:15-16, KJV

So to reiterate that point, converts who are still young in our Christian faith need and require teachers and elders to lead them along, and to make certain that they are being given a strong foundation in the Scriptures. Once they have grown and become mature in the faith, this won't be quite as necessary, being as they will know how to be led by the Holy Spirit in their understanding of the Bible.

Yet oddly enough, as I mentioned at the beginning of this article, sadly, there are certain misguided people on the social networks who in fact are rather quick to judge and really condemn their Christian brethren by saying something such as "Oh no! It is so wrong to desire that! We should not ever desire likes, comments, followers or friends! That is just catering to your pride and your ego! You are not being very humble! You just want people to put their eyes on you instead of on the Lord! That is just plain man worship!

Well, my friends, if their attitude and accusations are so correct, and if what they are saying is truly the case, then I suppose we should just throw out the New Testament verses which discuss how God raises up teachers in the Church. I am of course referring to verses such as the following:

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

1 Corinthians 12:28, KJV

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

Ephesians 4:11-12, KJV

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2, KJV

Now, it is only logical to assume that a teacher obviously has to have students or followers in order to have someone to teach, right? So is it really our place to condemn this? The answer is obviously not according to the Scriptures. So as I said at the beginning of this article, it all depends on one's personal motives. One can do it for the right reason -- meaning for God's glory and to bring more people into God's Kingdom, and to teach them the ways of the Lord and to instruct them in God's Word -- or else for the wrong reason -- meaning to heap praise upon himself, and to be lifted up in his own pride and ego. In his various Epistles, the Apostle Paul didn't hesitate to warn his readers of the danger of becoming lifted up in pride, and taking glory to ourselves, instead of giving it to the Lord. Consider the following group of Bible verses which prove this point:

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:31, KJV

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;"

1 Corinthians 3:21, KJV



"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth . . . Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:17-18, 31, KJV

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 10:17, KJV

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

2 Corinthians 12:5-6, KJV

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

Galatians 5:26, KJV

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Galatians 6:14, KJV

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."

## 1 Thessalonians 2:6, KJV

In short, if God should raise us up to be a teacher in His Church, we need to make certain that we don't allow such an elevated position to go to our head, so that we foolishly become lifted up in our pride. Likewise, we need to also remain humble in our understanding of His Word, realizing that none of us have a complete and perfect understanding concerning the same.

In conclusion, speaking for myself, personally, since many years ago, I believe that God has chosen me to be a fisher of men. By His own Will, He has likewise set me up to be a teacher of His Word. As such, not only do I want to obtain as many followers as possible -- just as the Apostle Paul had the same desire -- but I hope to draw as many folks to my Bill's Bible Basics website as I possibly can.

Why do I have this desire? Is it so that I can boast of my knowledge of God's Word? Most definitely not! It is because my BBB website is packed with many Bible-centric articles, graphics, poetry, songs, topical KJV Bible Verse Lists and more. It is in fact a veritable spiritual feast for God's hungry sheep. It contains everything I have learned over the past fifty-five years or so, and I am very eager to share my spiritual riches with the rest of the world, so that they too may partake of this spiritual wealth. I am convinced that my work will feed, inspire and motivate my visitors, and I see absolutely nothing wrong with that. I hope that you don't either.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

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